United Nations S/2004/737

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 September 2004

Original: English

Letter dated 7 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 6 September 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the establishment of an independent electoral commission in Burundi (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dirk Jan **van den Berg**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom
of the Netherlands to the United Nations

04-51168 (E) 160904

Annex to the letter dated 7 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Statement issued on 6 September 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the establishment of an independent electoral commission in Burundi

The European Union (EU) welcomes the establishment by the Burundese Government, after the approval given by National Assembly and Senate, of an independent electoral commission which will play the leading role in the organization of local, regional, parliamentary and presidential elections. The EU considers the establishment of the Commission as a major step in the implementation of the Arusha peace process. Its creation makes it possible to proceed with the adoption of a new constitution and electoral laws. The EU also welcomes the law that created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This Commission can be seen as a major instrument for reconciliation and durable peace as contained in the Arusha Peace Agreement. The EU urges all parties to adopt this law on the basis of the largest possible consensus.

The EU exhorts the Burundian Government, the National Assembly, the Senate and all political parties to take without delay all steps necessary for the organization of the elections, in line with the agenda set by the Regional Initiative at its meeting on 6 August, and to engage in the power-sharing agreement reached under the auspices of the Vice-President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, as facilitator of the Regional Initiative. The EU furthermore urges all parties to reach a consensus on the principles of power-sharing so as to allow the National Assembly to adopt the new Constitution within the deadline set by the Regional Initiative. The EU would like to congratulate South African President Thabo Mbeki on his efforts during the negotiations in Pretoria.

The EU reiterates its willingness to assist Burundi in the organization of free and fair elections and to reach a lasting solution to the conflicts that have destabilized the country over the past decades. In this regard, it underlines the need to proceed swiftly with the demobilization of armed groups in the country and with the reform of the security sector to ensure long-term peace and stability.

The candidate countries Romania, Turkey and Croatia,[a] the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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[a] Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process.